

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 583

FL 013 479

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TITLE Speaking Activities for the Advanced College-Bound Student.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (16th, Honolulu, HI, May 1-6, 1982).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Conversational Language Courses; Debate; *English (Second Language); *Learning Activities; Persuasive Discourse; *Public Speaking; Secondary Education; Second Language Instruction; *Speech Communication; Speeches; Speech Instruction; Speech Skills

ABSTRACT

Three activities for developing speaking skills of advanced English as second language students are presented. Impromptu speaking, extemporaneous speaking, and debate activities are designed to train students to organize concepts, develop spontaneous oral skills, and enhance confidence and clarity of thought. Impromptu speaking develops spontaneous thinking and clear organizational ability while improving confidence and laying the basis for the more complex speaking activities. Extemporaneous speaking develops detailed organizational patterns, transition, subordination, and focusing of topic sentences. Debate uses a three-person team structure to develop logical thinking, organization, argumentation, and reasoning. The objective of these activities is to promote the ability to think critically in English and transfer this thought process quickly into concise spoken English. Sample preparation sheets and critique forms are appended. (RW)

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Speaking Activities for the Advanced College-Bound Student

Abstract

This paper covers a unit of work on speaking which can be taught anywhere from a month to a semester. Rather than stressing grammatical correctness and communication, these activities emphasise speaking confidence, capability and clarity of thought in speech. The following speaking units train students in organizational concepts such as transition, limiting the topic, and subordination. In addition, these speaking activities promote and develop spontaneous oral skills.

The activities proposed are listed in order of speaking and organizational difficulty. 1. Impromptu Speaking develops spontaneous thinking and clear organizational ability, improves speaking confidence and lays the basis for the more complex speaking activities. 2. Extemporaneous Speaking develops detailed organizational patterns, transition, subordination and focuses topic sentences. 3. Debate with a three person team structure, provides a high intermediate/advanced level format. This activity stresses logical thinking, organization, argumentation and reasoning. Those students who already have strong argumentation skills are expected to refine speaking adaptability and verbal analysis.

Additional analysis of speech organizational style includes different types of introductory methods, idea development and elaboration skills as well as conclusion techniques. Examples of all of the above categories are also given.

Each speech activity has an appropriately developed critique sheet. This is used as a tool to increase student involvement in the organizational thinking process, notetaking and listening comprehension. The critique is also an excellent method to structure the follow-up question/discussion period.

The objective of these activities is to be able to think critically in English and to be able to transfer this thought process quickly, into spoken English in a confident, capable and concise fashion.

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Speaking Activities for the Advanced College-Bound Student
Don Henderson

The speaking activities in this paper, impromptu, extemporaneous speaking and debate have been developed to emphasise speaking confidence and to develop logical progression of thought in speech. Each speaking category is defined and outlined; in addition, organizational alternatives and topic suggestions are given. These activities can form the basis of a formal speaking curriculum and can be expanded or reduced with school and student requirements.

It is assumed the second language students participating in such a speech class would already have refined their abilities in reading and writing skills and are seeking to refine their abilities in formal speech presentation and communication which they will later use in college. Students should also improve listening comprehension and writing although there is no formal attempt to teach these skills per se.

Impromptu Speaking: is defined here as a speaking activity of limited duration and with very little formal preparation time.

There are three general types of impromptu speaking topics:

1. The one word topic. Examples are a) money, b) education and c) racism.
2. The fill-in-the-blank conditional and opinion topic. Examples are
a) If I were a millionaire I would _____ or
b) The greatest evil in society is _____ or
c) If I could change the world I would _____.
3. Quotes and sayings. Examples are a) The pen is mightier than the sword and b) A penny saved is a penny earned. This type of category is perhaps the most difficult since it requires more ability to think analytically in English. So, it is better to begin with the less complicated topics and move through to the more difficult.

In all of the speaking categories topics have to be selected because

of their importance and relevance to the students. This provides general interest in listening to the speeches and promotes stimulating discussion periods as students seek to clarify or expand provocative topics.

Impromptu Procedure

All topics are prepared by the teacher beforehand. And these topics remain unseen until the student actually makes a topic selection moments before speaking. There are two preparation alternatives:

1. prepare only two topics and have the five or so speakers wait outside (beyond hearing range) bringing them in one by one or
2. prepare many topics and have the speaker choose two from a hat replacing the rejected topic.

In either case the student always has to choose one of two topics. Give the student thirty (30) seconds to make the choice and then allow the student one minute (two minute maximum), depending on general class ability, to prepare his/her outline, however sketchy. The function of an impromptu speech is to develop an ability to extemporize but a non-native English speaker needs the support and organizational framework that an outline provides.

It helps to compare an impromptu speech with simple paragraphs because each topic sentence is elaborated by subordinated ideas linked by appropriate transitions.

How to Organize an Impromptu Speech

There are three basic ways to organize an unseen speaking topic and these methods should be taught in conjunction with the appropriate transition words.

Impromptu Speech Type I

This is based on the chronological/sequential organizational framework. If the student is good at history or geography or has any field of specialization that could provide an organizational focus then this is a convenient speech technique. For example, if

the one word topic were "money" the student could organize:

1. money through the ages from the barter system through to checks and the modern banking system. These ideas are linked with time.
2. money over geography comparing different money systems. These ideas are linked by space.

The teacher should use the time in introducing the chronological/sequential speech outline to connect it with the appropriate transition words. Examples of these would be "first", "second", "in the beginning", "then", "finally" etc. Such transition words not only help organizational skills in speaking but they are an important key in improving the necessarily related listening skills and notetaking techniques.

Impromptu Speech Type II

This speech type is the comparison/contrast type. Students can adopt a pro or con speech stance or use a combination of them both to reach the minimum speaking time. If, again, the topic were "money" the student could take the following stand:

1. Good - business, travel, world development or
2. Bad - greed, paper inflation, can't buy friends.

With this speech type a teacher would introduce such appropriate transition words as "on the one hand", "on the other hand", "but", "however" etc.

Impromptu Speech Type III

This speech type is expository and this technique is the most difficult since the student goes from the general to the specific or vice versa. An outline version of this impromptu format can be found in Appendix I.

This impromptu outline is divided into two sections for demonstration purposes. The column on the left is there only to indicate how, with "wh" questions, a student might reach the major sub-ideas that are listed in the right hand column. The column on the right shows how a student might develop ideas on the topic of "money" and how these ideas can be expanded with examples to support the major argument.

The "wh" questions are helpful as an organizational technique in all speech types. This is a good method to suggest to students so they can get ideas in the short preparation time. With the topic "money" they would ask such questions as " what money", "where found", "who has it" etc. This improves student confidence and provides them with substance and "evidence" for their speech.

Introduction Techniques

There are a number of introduction techniques and all must be attention-getting or the speaker will lose the audience before the speech has actually begun. The introduction generally contains the topic sentence which clearly states the speaker's intention. Again, if the topic were "money" the student may

1. ask a rhetorical question, e.g. Are you and your money better off than you were a year ago?
2. state the speaker's intention, e.g. Let me explain why money is harder to get than it was a year ago. or
3. outline the theme or problem in point form, e.g. There are five reasons why money is harder to get than it was a year ago.

Students can also introduce their speech with anecdotes, quotations or even rewording the question if the topic is in sentence form.

The Body of the Speech

In this section of the speech the speaker elaborates the major ideas of the introduction and provides examples and supporting arguments. In the impromptu outline of Appendix I probably any one of the A, B or C examples would provide sufficient material around which a speaker could develop an expository speech. A and B are ideas an advanced level student might choose to develop and C is an example of an idea a lower level student might develop. In the beginning stages of a speech class it is not so much the sophistication of the ideas that's important as much as clarity of thought and organization. The function of the examples provided is to show the students the numerous alternatives in addressing an unseen topic. The transition words are stressed as an aid in speech organization and listening comprehension.

Conclusion Techniques

There are a number of methods to conclude an impromptu speech. Some of the more straightforward ways are

1. if the time is pressing the speaker can simply, but emphatically, restate the topic sentence,
2. to reach minimum speaking time a student can summarize each major point made in the body of the speech or
3. a student could end with a quote or reference to another supporting source, e.g. "I'd like to close with the words of President Regan who in response to a recent reporter's question on money said "We are indeed better off than we were a year ago".

Timing is very important in all of the speaking activities. It gives the student working parameters. It sets goals, teaches the student the need for logical order and provides a simple measure for the student to gauge personal improvement. In other words the student who is unable to reach the minimum time limit has failed to provide sufficient evidence and the student who goes overtime has carelessly planned the speech. Consequently students can see, through experience, the need to carefully organize their speeches. Each impromptu speech should be a maximum of three (3) minutes. The speaker should be prepared to speak between two and three minutes. So, the timekeeper holds up timecards beginning with three minutes and goes backwards to a half a minute and STOP. Once the one (1) minute card is raised a student can begin to conclude because s/he has spoken between two and three minutes i.e. two minute minimum.

The Critique Sheet

The critique sheet, in whatever speech category, Impromptu (Appendix II), extemporaneous (Appendix IV) or debate (Appendix V) is an invaluable tool to measure and guide student speaking confidence and to improve listening comprehension. For example, in Appendix II, the impromptu critique sheet, as in all the other critique sheets, there are a number of equally weighted categories such as: introduction, clarity of thought, effectiveness of speech construction and delivery.

This shows the speaker/listener the criteria on which a speech is built. The teacher should take care that the students understand what each category means and how it fits into the speech organization. In all speech types this criteria stresses speech organization through simple unity. The critique sheet also provides a system for measuring speech performance. The value system has been designed to offer constructive peer criticism without placing an actual numerical value. If the class responds better to another system then this could be implemented. At the same time as explaining the measurement categories a teacher should take great care to stress the importance of the notetaking section at the bottom of each critique sheet.

Notetaking serves five functions:

1. When the teacher collects the critique sheets from the class after each speaking session s/he can see
 - a) how well the speaker was understood by the class (i.e. listener).
 - b) how well individual listeners thought the speech was organized.
 In other words, the teacher can see the speech from each student's point of view.
2. When the speakers get their critique sheets back they can see
 - a) which areas worked well and
 - b) which areas need improvement. This provides immediate feedback.
3. The notes taken down on the critique sheet provide source material for questions and clarification points in the question period that follows every speech.
4. For a follow-up exercise the teacher can have the listening students select one of the critique sheets they have completed during the lesson and write a composition based upon that sheet. The composition should be handed in later with the appropriate critique sheet attached. The function of this exercise is to show the students the importance of good organization. When the students have to develop paragraphs based on someone else's outline the necessity for clear organization becomes obvious.
5. By linking appropriate transition words to a particular speech type the student can soon recognize a particular speech format as well as learning that such transitions generally indicate that an

important point follows. In this way a teacher can indirectly improve the students' ability in listening comprehension.

There is no attempt, in these speaking activities, to differentiate between thought development patterns because of different cultural backgrounds. That falls under the scope of a formal rhetoric class. These activities are primarily used to improve speaking and speaking related skills.

Extemporaneous Speaking

This is defined here as a short formal speech, again on an unseen topic provided by the teacher. The topic is researched, either with the help of individual fact files or by using the school library. Preparation time should be at least one class period immediately before delivering the speech.

It is assumed that students in such a course have library skills, particularly in the use of the periodical guide, encyclopedias, bibliographies and dictionaries.

Extemporaneous speaking topics generally take the form of questions or agree/disagree statements. Topics are drawn from predetermined general research areas. Examples are famous people, general social issues or current world events.

In an ideal situation the student is given the choice of one of three topics; in reality the teacher, who has to prepare topics for all of the speakers, will generally only give the student one topic (i.e. no choice). Once the student has been assigned the topic s/he then, ideally, has one hour to prepare the speech. Extemp speeches are, therefore, expected to be better organized than impromptu and have a greater amount of supporting evidence by way of quotes, statistics, facts, etc.

In the introduction stages of this speaking category teachers should not limit the amount of helpful material e.g. notes, magazines,

pictures or charts a student might want when delivering the speech. This makes the student feel more comfortable although in reality the short speaking duration, (three minute (3) minimum to five (5) minute maximum) doesn't allow much time for the student to refer to extra source material. Eventually, the teacher should impose the restrictions necessary to develop the students' speaking skills. First, the teacher should limit the number of words a student can hold from unlimited, to 120, then down to 75. Second, the teacher has to be strict about the observance of the time limits. So, by slowly removing the speaking crutches a speaker's confidence can be maintained while the speaking complexities are increased.

Steps to Develop Extemporaneous Speaking Proficiency

Step I

- a) Ease the students into the more complex speech style by preparing topics that require limited research and that call for opinion. This extends the impromptu speech style but allows students more time to improve speech organization.
- b) As previously mentioned, place no limit on the amount of supplementary material a student wants to hold at the time of delivery.
- c) Have the most confident students speak first. This technique shows the others that the task is not too formidable.

Examples of general topics are

The role of women in society needn't be changed. Agree/Disagree or Are stereotypes of your people accurate?

Step II

- a) Slowly make the questions (topics) more specific, thereby requiring more reading and research.
- b) Provide each speaker with a copy of a topic related magazine article or explain where to find one. This requires the student to organize the speech with evidence but it lessens the required amount of research. This also means additional work for the teacher. The best method here is to find magazines/articles that use a pro/con format and so already present a good extemp situation. For example, the magazine U.S. News and World Report uses such a format.

Examples of more specific topics are

Television has a negative effect on society. Agree/Disagree or
Is pollution cause for common concern?

Step III

- a) Limit the amount of words a student can have to 75.
- b) Give the topic without source material or reference.
- c) Work on platform skills such as poise, gesture, eyecontact.

At this stage the student should be able to direct him/herself to the question while implementing other platform skills.

Topic examples:

1. Literacy is India's main problem. Agree/Disagree.
2. Genetic experimentation should be discontinued. Agree/Disagree.
3. Argentina should withdraw all claims to the Falklands. A/D.

Extemp can perhaps be compared to a three paragraph composition in that there is more time to develop ideas with supporting evidence. As with impromptu, the student should study the extemporaneous preparation outline sheet (appendix 3) and the extemporaneous speaking critique sheet (appendix 4) prior to actually beginning the formal speech presentations. This will help the students set priorities and help them see how a speech should be organized and delivered. These sheets however, are flexible and can be adapted depending on the particular class requirements.

Extemporaneous Speaking Structure and Organization

When the students study the extemp outline sheet they will see that the structures of both this and impromptu speeches are essentially the same. The student opens the speech with an attention getting topic sentence, develops the body of the speech in much the same way and concludes with a convincing wind-up. Moreover, the method of speech organization for both speech types is the same.

1. Chronological/Sequential
2. Comparison/Contrast which is a good extemp format, and
3. Expository.

This familiarity of organization and structure enables the student to incorporate the additional requirements of research and speaking presence without becoming overwhelmed. So while emphasis is still on the elaboration of main ideas with supporting evidence good platform skills begin to assume an importance.

The following is a very brief sketch outline of the development of an extemporaneous speech. The topic: Argentina should withdraw all claims to the Falklands. Agree/Disagree.

Students might begin with a quotation:

As Argentina's past President Galtieri clearly stated, "The chances of peace are narrowing" therefore _____ (statement of theme). The evidence in support of this deduction is overwhelming as I quote from Time Magazine (date) (quote) and (quote). Furthermore, link (supporting information). However, _____ (contrary fact). Nevertheless, _____ (reestablish the stand) and _____ (more evidence). So for the above reasons of A, B, C, I conclude that _____.

Early speeches don't have to be very sophisticated. Students don't have to believe in the stand they adopt. Emphasis is on communication developed through logical extemporization.

Debate

The debate format as elaborated in appendix 5 can be introduced at the high intermediate level and has been developed to involve the maximum number of students, i.e. three people on each team with a chairperson and timekeeper. If the class size or student numbers require smaller teams then this is another possibility.

The method/manner/material format enables students to critique a debate without getting lost in the techniques of more advanced debate procedure. There should be a chairperson to introduce the topic and the debaters as they rise to speak. Speaking time is a maximum of five minutes with no minimum although failure to use the speaking time constructively could lead to the loss of the debate. At the end of

the debate the speakers should be available for class questions. These questions should be based on the information taken down on the critique sheets during the course of the debate.

Topics should be of general nature, easily researched and of student interest. Research time should be at least two weeks and students should be encouraged to share information since ^{debate} is not so much the presentation of an overwhelming amount of facts as it is working in the art of argumentation. It is important to stress that evidence does not replace, but reinforces adaptability, reasoning and analytical thinking. Nevertheless, students have to develop their own file cards with appropriate evidence, quotations and statistics.

Topic suggestions:

Euthenasia should be legalized.

Capital punishment should be abolished.

Additional ideas can be found in many general conversation books e.g. Alexander For and Against and Take a Stand and Pifer and Mutoh Points of View.

General categories to look for in debate are

1. Analysis and organization ... focus, clarity, consistency
2. Information and evidence .. unsupported assertions, fallacies
3. Argument and reasoning .. quick sound thinking, original
4. Adaptability ... listening carefully, changing tack
5. Ability in rebuttal .. clear organization and summary
6. Speaking effectiveness .. forceful, direct, sincere
7. Teamwork .. helping the speaker by giving evidence on notes.

The debate ballot, appendix 5, tries to simplify these concepts so high intermediate and advanced students can participate. All of the categories are explained so students understand the necessity for organization and development.

The Speaking Roles of the Three Person Debate

1st Affirmative: defines the problem and debate terms, details and shows why the proposition is correct.

1st Negative: either accepts or redefines the terms and shows why there is no real debatable issue.

2nd Affirmative: elaborates on the problem with data, examples and general history.

2nd Negative: refutes the above problems and provides an alternative interpretation or plays down the problem.

3rd Affirmative: rebuts the entire negative case with evidence and makes a solid pro conclusion.

3rd Negative: ties up the case in total affirmative rebuttal and reestablishes the negative side with evidence.

Debate brings together all the skills developed in the other speaking categories. Organization and clarity are paramount and speaking confidence and body language is reinforced.

Expected Results from the Speaking Activities

1. Organizational ability and confidence in spoken English improves.
2. Students learn to distinguish between main and supporting ideas and to reach conclusions.
3. Students develop the ability to organize and deliver well developed thoughts in English.
4. Listening comprehension is refined.
5. Students improve ability to research, scan and perceive patterns of ideas.
6. Students learn to read (and listen) for concepts and the general grasp of articles and ideas.
7. Vocabulary and transition improves.
8. Culturally appropriate use of non-technical language aspects, such as body language, improves.
9. Students develop skills that will transfer to other areas particularly writing.

IMPROMPTU

Appendix I

A Sample Preparation Card

This is a suggested outline only . It is much larger than one that students would normally have time to prepare. Any one of the A, B, or C divisions would normally be enough to provide a good speech. Where, when, who, why, etc are idea developers only and are by no means compulsory.

The left hand column indicates divisions a student might use. The choice of "wh" words has been arbitrary. The right hand column is an approximation of what a students outline might look like.

Topic: "money"

Premise: not good

Introduction:

Where, when, why questions etc.

Quote: The Bible says money is the root of all evil

where: Government, Business, Personal

Body:

Where.....

A. Government 1. increase tax
result: less money for poor, education, arts

example

Example: Regan/Thatcher/EEC

how

2. Increase spending on defense
result: wars

example.....

Example: Middle East/Africa

who

B. Business

Multinational industries exploit

example

Example: ITT/Chile, NP South Africa

2. Money leads to greed in business

Example: T.V. show Dallas and J.R.

examples ...

C. Personal

1. Story - mother's purse

2. Story - results in change in personality

Conclusion:

Therefore Because of A, B, and C money is ...
OR

Because of the previously mentioned points I would like to recall the opening quote and state emphatically that "money is....

N.B. Students will normally abbreviate.

Appendix II

I M P R O M P T U C R I T I Q U E S H E E T

Speakers Name: _____

Critiquers Name: _____

Indicate a value for each category using the following scale:
+ for above average, 0 for average, and - for needs improvement.

	<u>Score</u>
1. Adequate introduction which catches attention and arouses interest	_____
2. Clarity in Expression of Thought:	
a. Adequate statement of problem or idea	_____
b. Effective elaboration of the idea	_____
3. Effectiveness in Speech Construction:	
Continuity of thought through unity, coherence, clearness, force, and attractiveness	_____
4. Delivery:	
a. Poise, physical gesture	_____
b. Force, fluency, enunciation, and projection..	_____

Time: _____

Notes:
Introduction:

Body:

Conclusion:

An Outline for the Preparation of an Extemporaneous Speech

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Appendix IV

Extemporaneous Speaking Critique Sheet

Name: _____

Against each category indicate a + for above average, 0 for average, and - for needs improvement

Organisation:	Score
1. Was the introduction adequate?	_____
2. Were the main ideas apparent?	_____
3. Were the transitions clear?	_____
4. Was the conclusion adequate?	_____
5. Was the speech clearly outlined and easy to follow?	_____
<u>Clarity in Expression of Thought:</u>	
1. Did the speaker demonstrate a knowledge of the topic being considered?	_____
2. Was the purpose of the speech clearly stated?	_____
3. Did the student select significant ideas and treat them in a meaningful manner?	_____
4. Did the student possess the ability to extemporise, to compose his/her language as he/she spoke?	_____
5. Was the evidence pertinent, dependable, and sufficient?	_____
<u>Delivery:</u>	
1. Was the speaker audible, direct, poised, understandable?	_____
2. Did posture, movement, gesture, and facial expression improve the communication of ideas?	_____

Time: _____

Comments:

SCORE EACH TEAM MEMBER USING THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO EVALUATE EACH SPEAKER'S EFFECTIVENESS:

1. Needs improvement; 2. Fair; 3. Average; 4. Good; 5. Excellent

The points should be divided along the following lines:
Manner- 5 points; Method- 5 points; Material- 5 points

These each consist of:

Manner- Does the speaker speak in a clear understandable manner? Does he/she look at the audience? Does the speaker speak about the topic rather than just reading from a paper? Are poise and gesture appropriate?

Method- Is the speech well organized? Is the speech logical? Is there continuity of thought through unity, coherence and clearness?

Material- Does the speaker convince (or inform) through evidence (examples, quotations, authorities, encyclopedias, etc.) and/or reasoning?

<u>AFFIRMATIVE</u>	1	2	3	<u>NEGATIVE</u>	1	2	3
<u>MANNER</u> (5)							
<u>METHOD</u> (5)							
<u>MATERIAL</u> (5)							
<u>TOTAL</u>							

*N.B. Points don't always determine the winner although they often provide the best guide. The winner should be decided on whether the major contention is effectively (a) introduced/elaborated/concluded by the affirmative or (b) rebutted/argued/concluded by the negative.

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